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No 3.

CANADA.

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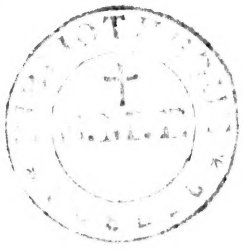

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MDCCCXXXVIII.

CANADA.

CIVIL war has at length been forced upon the unhappy people of Lower Canada. This result might have been foreseen, and indeed was foreseen, as being certain to flow from Lord John Russell's tyrannical resolutions.

The people of Canada complained of grievances; in order to obtain their removal, the Canadian House of Commons refused supplies, commissioners were then sent out to report upon those grievances; they did report that the complaints of the Canadians were just. Instead of remedying them however, Lord John Russell robs the Exchequer.

What was the conduct of the people in this painful emergency? Did they at once take up arms and resist this atrocious violation of their rights? No. They determined on another course, namely, *passive resistance.* County meetings were held in all parts of the country. At these meetings resolutions were passed denouncing the "atrocious resolutions," and determining to destroy the revenue by consuming no duty-paying articles, and by encouraging the smuggler.

All the meetings were attended by the county magistrates, who thereupon were dismissed by Lord Gosford. This aroused the people still further—they declared it to be disgraceful to hold a commission under the executive, and those who had not been honoured by dismissal, resigned. The people at length elected a magistracy of their own.

By the early part of November the excitement throughout the country had become very great, and an outrage which occurred in Montreal increased it still further. On the evening of the 6th of November, a Tory mob turned out, made an attack upon the principal liberal newspaper, and destroyed the office. Magistrates—partizan magistrates, were present, and *refused to protect the property* though requested to do so.

The troops had been called out on a previous disturbance, and were so stationed, that the slightest interference might have saved the property. Had friends however, interfered, the impression was that they would have been fired on. Had the paper been one belonging to the dominant faction, the assailants would have been slaughtered.

A week after this plunder some arrests of patriots were made, on some vague charges of sedition; and it was allowed to be whispered that warrants were out to arrest others, including M. Papineau. Feeling that they had no justice to expect from partizan judges and a packed jury, the threatened parties withdrew from Montreal. To drive them to do this in order to identify them with the expected outbreaks was evidently the intention of the government; else, why were they not arrested at once without suffering the intention to be whispered abroad? There is in short evidence of design, from the proposal of Lord John Russell's resolutions, to the spilling of blood at St Charles.

Soon after these arrests the civil war commenced. A party of cavalry was sent to arrest some persons at St John's, 18 miles from Montreal. The arrests were made, but on returning towards Montreal the cavalry (amateurs) were fired at, and they fled, leaving their prisoners.

It was now understood that the Patriots in considerable force had occupied St Charles and St Denis, two villages nine miles apart, on the river Richelieu or Chambly (it is known by both names), about 30 miles south-east of Montreal. Hereupon a military force, about 280 strong, under Colonel Gore, was dispatched from Quebec, with directions to drive the Patriots from St Denis; which accomplished, he was to join Colonel Wetherall, with a force of between 400 and 500, to annihilate the Patriots at St Charles. Colonel Gore accordingly marched upon St Denis: there he was met boldly by the Patriots, and fairly beaten back, with the loss of a gun, abandoned in the retreat. Mind—his object was to march through St Denis to join Colonel Wetherall in the attack upon St Charles, nine miles further. *In this he failed.*

In the meantime Colonel Wetherall left Chambly still higher up the river, and on the night of the 25th of November attacked and burned a part of St Charles. The accounts of this affair are very conflicting. The Tory papers of Montreal, exultingly reported the "slaughter of the rebels as great." The papers of the neighbouring state of Vermont say that the troops were afterwards beaten—for the present, however, we must take the Colonel's own despatch. He "counted fifty-six bodies, and many more were killed in the buildings, and their bodies burned."

What did this gallant Colonel then do? did he do what

Gore had failed in doing—did he advance on St Denis, and put the insurgents *hors de combat?* No: learning "that a considerable body of men had assembled at Point Oliviere, for the purpose of cutting off his *retreat* (what a word for a successful commanding officer!) from St Charles, he resolved on attacking them in preference to marching on St Denis."

Thus then, read the despatches which way we may, we can only see *failure*. Blood has been shed *unprofitably*. But the Patriots remain undislodged from the country they occupy.

At the latest accounts Wetherall had continued his *retreat* —this word, mind is *his own*, not *ours*—to Montreal, and Gore had been sent down the river, probably as a blind, with the intention of landing at the lower end of the Island of Montreal, and proceeding to St Benoit or Grand Brulé, in the county of Two Mountains, north-west of Montreal, where there are said to be some thousands of men in arms.

In short, Lower Canada is armed. She has been goaded to resistance under the foolish impression, made by a man who ought to have known better, "that the Canadians will not fight." They *have* fought, and with determined bravery. They will again fight, and, we believe, will not be put down. If ministers were bold enough to pursue the dictates of common sense, we believe it is not too late to *stop bloodshed by conciliation*. Lord Melbourne is a clear-seeing man on some occasions. Let him take the matter out of Lord John Russell's hands, and disgrace and dishonour may yet be averted.